

TREASURY DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE,
February 9, 1934.

Press Service
No. 1-30

The Secretary of the Treasury announced today the appointment by the President of the members of the Annual Assay Commission, which will meet at the Philadelphia Mint next Wednesday, February 14, to test for weight and fineness samples of coins which have been produced by the United States Mints during the last year. The appointed members of the Commission are:

Dr. A. R. Johnston, Reevesville, S.C.
Hon. William A. Ashbrook, Johnstown, Ohio.
Mr. L. E. Brown, Jackson, Mississippi.
Hon. Arthur Capper, United States Senate,
Miss Ellen Gowen Hood, Philadelphia, Pa.
Mr. Roland Morris, Philadelphia, Pa.

In addition the following are Ex-officio Members of the Commission:

The Comptroller of the Currency.
The Judge of the District Court for the
Eastern District of Pennsylvania.
The Assayer, U.S. Assay Office, New York.

The coins to be tested are gold and silver coins only. They consist of two samples, chosen at random, of each delivery of coins made by each of the Mints. The coins as they are collected during the year are deposited in a sealed box at the Philadelphia Mint, known as the "pyx box" or "pyx chest" or simply as the "pyx".

The Assay Commission divides itself into three committees, one for weighing, one for counting and one for assaying the coins, the assaying, of course, being done under the supervision of the assayer from New York.

This annual ceremony is an ancient one. Records of it are kept in books at the office of the Director of the Mint. The first of these volumes records in long hand the report of the meeting of the first Assay Commission on Monday, April 27, 1801, at the mint in Philadelphia, which was the only United States Mint at the time. The act authorizing the Commission had been passed by Congress on March 3, 1801. This first record reads as follows:

"At a meeting of the Commissioners appointed by an act of Congress of 3rd March, 1801, for the purpose of inspecting the coins of the United States at the Mint of the United States on Monday the 27th day of April, 1801:

"Present Richard Peters, Esq., Judge, Jared Ingersoll, Attorney of the United States, Stephen Moylan, Commissioner of Laws, for the District of Pennsylvania; also the Director, Treasurer, Chief Coiner, Assayer and Melter and Refiner of the Mint --

"The Commissioners proceeded to count and examine the reserves of silver coin found in the chest under two locks, the keys of which had been kept by the Assayer and Treasurer, and compared them with the book in which they had been entered, and on finding them agreeably (sic) thereto; it was ordered that the whole of the reserved pieces should be melted into one mass, and assayed in two separate parcells --

"It was ordered, that one parcell of pure silver, with the proportionate alloy of copper to make it equal with the standard of the United States, should be assayed at the same time, and under the same circumstances, to serve as a proof of the assay of the coin --

"The gold coin reserved in like manner was also counted and compared with the book and appearing to be right, was directed to be melted and assayed in like manner.

"The silver assays being made and compared with the proof assay, it appeared that they agreed within 3 grains to 12 ounces, the coin being so much less than standard --

"The gold assays being made and accurately weighed and compared with the standard appeared to be the 384th part worse than the standard.

"The several deficiencies above mentioned being within the remedy allowed by the act of Congress, the coins issued since the 12th day of February in the year 1800 are approved.

"Witness our hands this 27th April, 1801.

Richard Peters
Jared Ingersoll
Stephen Moylan
Elias Boudinot, D.M."